

To: Community Pharmacists

Western Office

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Cc: (see attached distribution list)

HSCB Ref: ICPL/2018/033

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20 August 2018

Dear Colleagues

**LEARNING FROM A RECENT SERIOUS ADVERSE INCIDENT:
DISPENSING PARACETAMOL WITHOUT A CHILD RESISTANT CAP**

HSCB has been made aware of a recent serious adverse incident where a child was admitted to hospital and treated for an overdose of paracetamol. Thankfully the child recovered and was discharged after two days but the outcome could have been catastrophic.

CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS

- The suspension was dispensed in the original 500ml dispensing bottle which **did not have a child resistant closure**.
- The bottle had been stored by the parent on a high shelf in the fridge but the child still managed to access it.

LEARNING

The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland's *Professional Standards and Guidance for the Sale and Supply of Medicines (3.10)*, requires that¹:

- **All solid dose and all oral and external liquid preparations are dispensed in suitable re-closable child resistant containers unless:**
 - the medication is in an original pack or patient pack such as to make this inadvisable;
 - the patient has difficulty in opening a child resistant container;

¹ http://www.psnri.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/standards_on_sale_and_supply_of_medicines-revised1mAR2016.pdf

- a specific request is made by the patient, their carer or representative that the product is not dispensed in a child resistant container;
- no suitable child resistant container exists for a particular liquid preparation or
- the patient has been assessed as requiring a compliance aid

HSCB Dispensing Service Specification 3.4 requires that patients are advised on the safe storage and keeping of medicines².

RECOMMENDATIONS

Community pharmacists should review relevant procedures to ensure that:

- **Packaging is checked to ensure compliance with the standards before hand over to the patient**
- **Patients are given advice on safe storage of medicines particularly when the product is not dispensed in a child resistant container.**
- **Consideration is given to availability of products in child resistant containers when procuring medicines.**

You may wish to share this letter with procurement colleagues if relevant.

If you have any queries please contact your Pharmacy Adviser.

Yours sincerely,



Joe Brogan
Assistant Director of Integrated Care
Head of Pharmacy and Medicines Management

Contact details for Local Integrated Care Offices:

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|--|--|--|--|---|
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|--|--|--|--|---|

² http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/pdf/2014-01-13_Final_HSC_Dispensing_Specification.pdf

RE: ICPL/2018/033 - LEARNING FROM A RECENT SAI: DISPENSING PARACETAMOL WITHOUT A CHILD RESISTANT CAP

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|---|-----------------|------|---|-----------------|------|
| HSC Trusts | | | PHA | | |
| CEXs | | ✓ | CEX | | ✓ |
| Medical Director | | ✓ | Medical Director/Director of Public Health | | ✓ |
| Directors of Nursing | | ✓ | Director of Nursing/AHPs | | ✓ |
| Directors of Social Services | | | PHA Duty Room | | |
| Governance Leads | | ✓ | AD Health Protection | | |
| Directors of Acute Services | | ✓ | AD Service Development/Screening | | ✓ |
| Directors of Community/Elderly Services | | | AD Health Improvement | | |
| Heads of Pharmacy | | ✓ | AD Nursing | | ✓ |
| Allied Health Professional Leads | | | AD Allied Health Professionals | | |
| Directors of Human Resources | | | Clinical Director Safety Forum | | ✓ |
| NIAS | | | HSCB | | |
| CEX | | ✓ | CEX | | ✓ |
| Medical Director | | ✓ | Director of Integrated Care | | ✓ |
| RQIA | | | Director of Social Services | | |
| CEX | | ✓ | Director of Commissioning | | |
| Medical Director | | ✓ | Alerts Office | | ✓ |
| Director of Nursing | | ✓ | Dir PMSI & Corporate Services | | |
| Director for Social Care | | | Primary Care (through Integrated Care) | | |
| NIMDTA | | | GPs | | ✓ |
| CEX / PG Dean | | ✓ | Community Pharmacists | ✓ | |
| QUB | | | Dentists | | |
| Dean of Medical School | | ✓ | BSO | | |
| Head of Nursing School | | ✓ | Director of Human Resources | | |
| Head of Social Work School | | | Open University | | |
| Head of Pharmacy School | | ✓ | Head of Nursing Branch | | ✓ |
| Head of Dentistry School | | | DoH | | |
| UU | | | CMO office | | ✓ |
| Head of Nursing School | | ✓ | CNO office | | ✓ |
| Head of Social Work School | | | CPO office | | ✓ |
| Head of Pharmacy School | | ✓ | CSSO office | | |
| Head of School of Health Sciences (AHP Lead) | | | CDO office | | |
| Clinical Education Centre | | ✓ | Safety, Quality & Standards Office | | |
| NIPEC | | ✓ | NI Social Care Council | | |
| GAIN Office | | ✓ | Safeguarding Board NI | | |
| NICPLD | | ✓ | NICE Implementation Facilitator | | ✓ |
| NI Medicines Governance Team Leader for Secondary Care | | ✓ | Coroners Service for Northern Ireland | | ✓ |

